

# Being Friends Together

Ways of Working > Guidelines for Facilitators

## General guidance for facilitators

### Relax

Your task is to help the participants enjoy and benefit from the session and learn from each other. Remember you do not have to be experts on the subject. Your aim is to help the session go well.

### Work with a partner

We recommend that two people take responsibility for leading each session. This means you can support each other, and one person can be aware of the needs of the group while the other leads. Take turns.

### Be prepared

Make sure that you have read and familiarised yourself with [any] introductory [texts], and the exercise you are choosing to lead. Check that you have the materials you need and that you understand the timings suggested.

### Be flexible

Timings are suggestions only. You may want to alter them to suit the time available or the nature of the group. Be creative.

### Establish ground-rules

The most important is confidentiality – nothing said in the room is to be repeated outside. Other rules might be to speak only from your own experience, to allow everyone to contribute or not as they wish, to value and listen respectfully to everyone's contributions even if you disagree with them. Remind the group of these from time to time.

### Be aware

Do not let one person dominate; make it clear that you are encouraging everyone to participate. Make space for those who find it harder to speak in a group. Be aware of those with sight, hearing or mobility impairment and do what is necessary to enable them to participate fully. Check with them beforehand what they need and prefer – offer to print handouts in a larger font or use recorded passages on CD or audio tape. If using a flip-chart, write boldly and clearly using a black marker pen.

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Being Friends Together is a joint project of Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre (Registered Charity Number: 313816) and Britain Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) (Registered charity number: 112763).



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## Small groups

Many of the exercises suggest working in pairs or small groups. This increases safety for those who find larger groups difficult, but some people don't like it; explain why you are doing it. Use a variety of methods to split up the group – e.g. suggesting people turn to those near them, or counting round the room, or finding someone they haven't worked with before.

## Ending

Several exercises end with group discussion or worship sharing. Be sensitive to the mood and nature of the group when choosing which to use. Confident and articulate people are often at ease taking part in a discussion. Others value the space to speak and the discipline which worship sharing offers. Consult the group or use your judgement.

A reminder about the worship sharing process:

- The session is in the spirit of worship, grounded in silence
- Participants should speak when they are ready, from their own experience
- Others should focus on listening, upholding the speaker, letting go of any desire to react or respond
- Leave some silence between contributions so that the group remains centred
- Participants should not speak more than once, at least before everyone has spoken.

These guidelines are drawn from the accumulated experience of many facilitators which has been collected and used over the years; we don't know all their names, but thank them all.

An extract from *Engaging with the Quaker testimonies: A toolkit*, Testimonies Committee, Quaker Books, 2007, reproduced with permission

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